

Working Group C Report

Working Group C discussed 24/7 Operations Centres created to respond to passport alert hits. The group considered the experience of 24/7 border operations centres established since the last workshop to support RMAS and MIND / FIND operations.

The group acknowledged the progress made by some participants to electronically authenticate travel document information, and a number of projects underway to build capacity in this area.

There was general consensus amongst the group on the value of real time verification of passports, and the 24/7 model to support such verification. At the same time, the group recognised the capacity and resource constraints for many participants in adapting such models.

The group also identified the need for a greater appreciation of the benefits of closer alignment between agencies on real time information sharing, and increased cross-agency cooperation and coordination.

Major obstacles to adopting 24/7 models included:

- 24/7 centre establishment costs
- Staffing and language skills requirements
- Ongoing commercial connection and operational costs.

Participants noted that the need for 24/7 centres would have to be subject to a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate whether the potential benefits would justify the resources required.

Participants were encouraged to use their existing systems to further increase their capacity and capability to share information on a real time basis nationally, regionally and/or globally, as their specific circumstances permit.

The Group:

- a) Noted participants' wide ranging technical capacity and resources to electronically authenticate travel document information;
- b) Welcomed the opportunity to consider using existing systems to enhance the capacity to verify travel document information in real time; and

- c) Encouraged participants to consider RMAS, Interpol's MIND / FIND as well as other models, including smaller-scale operations, for the effective and secure real time authentication of travel document information. A possible initiative would be the development of a model specifically targeted towards the needs of small and/or other Bali Process countries seeking expertise in this area. Funding and appropriate practical assistance from Bali Process countries in support of such an initiative would be welcome.